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Orem street to close for I-15 bridge work

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Road crews will close a major street in Orem Wednesday night while they knock down the outer parts of a bridge on Interstate 15.

The closure on 800 North is the latest in a construction season that has proved smoother than officials had warned it might be at the start of a project to expand the freeway through Utah County. It precedes an overnight closure of the freeway itself at Provo this weekend.

The Utah Department of Transportation and its contractors have kept three lanes open in each direction, except during the occasional night closures. That's a big improvement over the one lane originally expected at the Provo "S" curve, which could have meant a couple of hours of delay at peak times.

"Traffic has been pretty good," said Scott Thompson, a UDOT regional spokesman who commutes from Sandy to Orem every day. "I still see some congestion at peak commute times, but we had that before."

Orem's 800 North will close at 10 p.m. and reopen Thursday at 5:30 a.m. Crews must demolish the outer 12 feet of the freeway bridge to allow eventual widening of the structure for added lanes. The interchange ramps will remain open, but east-west travel under the freeway will not be possible.

A full freeway closure at Provo Center Street will follow overnight on Saturday as workers complete similar work there from 11 p.m. until 11:30 a.m. Sunday.

The relative ease of traversing this major construction zone — as opposed to previous experiences on I-80 and I-15 in Salt Lake County — has truckers pleased. Few have called to complain, Utah Trucking Association Executive Director Dave Creer said, and he believes members approve after seeing how the previous expansions have helped move Wasatch Front traffic.